CLAIMS

1. A television signal receiver (20) having an emergency alert function, comprising:

a tuner (22) operative to tune a frequency including emergency alert signals indicating a type of emergency event; and

a processor (27) operative to enable an alert output responsive to the emergency alert signals, wherein the alert output is provided in accordance with a user selectable alert mode corresponding to the type of emergency event.

2. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 1, further comprising an interface (50) operative to enable a user to turn the alert output on and off.

3. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 1, wherein the processor (27) is further operative to enable a plurality of alert outputs responsive to the emergency alert signals, and the plurality of alert outputs are provided in accordance with a plurality of user selectable alert modes corresponding to the type of emergency event.

4. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 3, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs is a visual output.

5. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 3, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs is an aural output.

6. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 3, further comprising an interface (50) operative to enable a user to turn at least one of the plurality of alert outputs on and off.

7. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 6, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs can not be completely turned off by a user.

8. A television signal receiver (20) having an emergency alert function, comprising:

tuning means (22) for tuning a frequency including emergency alert signals indicating a type of emergency event; and

processing means (27) for enabling an alert output responsive to the emergency alert signals, wherein the alert output is provided in accordance with a user selectable alert mode corresponding to the type of emergency event.

9. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 8, further comprising interface means (50) for enabling a user to turn the alert output on and off.

10. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 8, wherein the processing means (27) enables a plurality of alert outputs responsive to the emergency alert signals, and the plurality of alert outputs are provided in accordance with a plurality of user selectable alert modes corresponding to the type of emergency event.

11. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 10, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs is a visual output.

12. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 10, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs is an aural output.

13. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 10, further comprising interface means (50) for enabling a user to turn at least one of the plurality of alert outputs on and off.

14. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 13, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs can not be completely turned off by a user.

15. A method (30) for controlling a television signal receiver (20) having an emergency alert function, comprising:

tuning a frequency including emergency alert signals indicating a type of emergency event (32); and

providing an alert output responsive to the emergency alert signals, wherein the alert output is provided in accordance with a user selectable alert mode corresponding to the type of emergency event (34).

16. The method (30) of claim 15, further comprised of enabling a user to turn the alert output on and off (35).

17. The method (30) of claim 15, further comprised of providing a plurality of alert outputs responsive to the emergency alert signals, and the plurality of alert outputs are provided in accordance with a plurality of user selectable alert modes corresponding to the type of emergency event (34).

18. The method (30) of claim 17, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs is a visual output.

19. The method (30) of claim 17, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs is an aural output.

20. The method (30) of claim 17, further comprised of enabling a user to turn at least one of the plurality of alert outputs on and off (35).

21. The method (30) of claim 20, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs can not be completely turned off by a user.